

BE FAIR TO ISLAM

Assalamualaikum, Peace be upon you

“O mankind! We have created you out of a male and a female, and we have made you tribes and subtribes that you may recognize (and do good to) one another. Surely the most honorable of you in the sight of Allah is he who guards against evil the most. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.”

(Surah Al-Hujurat (the Chamber) verse 13)

The above Surah implies that Muslim are already getting used to the differences. We respect the difference. We were born because of the difference. Our father is a male and our mother, a female. Our father could be black, while mother white or both white but different characteristics. That makes life so colorful and beautiful. Can you imagine if all the same? Life must be boring, no color, and no harmony. No one is perfect. That is why we can complete one another.

What has been happening for more a decade is that Islam is always labelled terrorist for someone or a group of radicalism who name themselves as Islamic radical group. How do they know Islam teaches terrorism. Islam means submission, devotion, and peace. This really intimidating us as Moslems. In Indonesia, Islam is the majority but you see other religions can stay well. We protect them from any harm. But we do not get any protection if we are minor. Let us take a look a mass shooting occurred in Western countries. No one say terrorist for the attackers. But just one Muslim did, he is terrorist. Be fair!

October 1, 2017, the day when Stephen Paddock fired a group of people in Last Vegas, 58 killed and 515 wounded. June 3, 2017 an attack in London left 7 people dead and 48 injured. An attack in Manchester May 22, 2017 left 22 people dead and 59 injured. The bomber was Salman Ramadhan Abedi. Kalid Masood killed 6 people and 59 injured in his attack. Thomas Mair on March 22, 2017 shot and stabbed to death Labour MP Jo Cox in Bristall, West Yorkshire. Many similar incidents have happened before. US Today noted that in 551 days there were 555 mass shootings in US. The attackers were arrested peacefully and no one, no one said that they were terrorists. You know why because they were not Moslem. Their religions were not Islam. We, Moslems didn't question their religions. We didn't ask their people. We didn't ask to leave the country. They did it alone. They didn't represent their religions, or their Gods and their people. We know religion teaches good things always. If the followers do wrong, that is merely about individual not religions. Any religion has bad followers. You see the shooters in US are mostly Christians, In China, Confusions, in Japan, Shinto, also in Indonesia, as Islamic followers, in Mynmar, Buddist, and In India, they are Hindus.

Islamic students who study in Europe and USA are banned to wear hijab (headscarft). They do not do wrong. They just follow what their religion asks them to do as good Moslems. In

other incident, Our Holy Book, Qur'an was burnt in US. American movies always exploits terrorism in their stories. The terrorists are labeled using Islamic symbols such as clothes, middle east regions, and greeting "Assalamualaikum". Moreover, picture of Prophet Muhammad is also painted in a book or magazine. It is really hurting us. What is wrong with Islam. They said Jihad is often translated as a holy war. What do they know about Jihad? In fact, Jihad means struggling or striving. War in Arabic means "Al-harb". In Quran and Hadiths, the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad; Jihad has many meanings. It can mean efforts to be a good Moslem or believer as well as working to inform people about the faith of Islam.

Prophet Muhammad said to his followers:

"this day we have returned from the minor jihad to the major jihad," which he said meant returning from armed battle to the peaceful battle for self control and betterment. In short, the major jihad is not about war but to control your self from doing wrong is the major battle because it is not easy. The concept of jihad has been misused by many political and religious groups over the ages to justify various forms of violence. In most cases Islamic splinter group invoked jihad to fight against the established Islamic order. Scholars say this misuse of jihad contradicts Islam.

To offer solution of the problem the world face is to establish the International Interfaith Forum. This is what Indonesia has done for years and years. Indonesia is multicultural, multiethnic, tribal and subtribal country. It has almost 17.000 islands and six religions, hundreds of local languages but we are tied by our "Unity in Diversity or Bhineka Tunggal Ika. We are the biggest Islamic populated country. The other religions like Protestant, Catholic, Hindu, Buddha, and Confusion live happily and peacefully. We can live side by side. Our place to worship God the Almighty can also stand side by side. It doesn't matter. In any country where Islam is the majority, other religions can grow well, peacefully, and in harmony. However, when Islam is the minority, Moslems are often treated bad. Remember, in September 11, Twin Tower tragedy, Moslems were attacked, banned, chased and even shot for terrorist act they never did. Until now, we never know who is Osama Bin Laden, Is he real or just what people say now is that September 11 was just inside job. In countries like France, Germany, Australia, Dutch, Muslim women were banned wearing hijab. At the same time, when people from those countries visit Indonesia, they live, act, and behave like what they do in their countries. We realize that we are not the same. We are coming from different regions, different religions, different culture, and different ways of life. It is impossible to make them follow our way of life. Since we realize that we are different so we just let them as they would like to do.

This forum works to promote understanding, cooperation and good relations between organizations and persons of different faith. It works through providing opportunities for linking and sharing of good practice, providing advice and information to help find out the solutions of any conflicts may happen and strengthening the existing ones. It raises awareness within wider society of the importance of interfaith issues and develops programs to develop understanding about faith communities. Including both their distinctive features and areas of common ground. In Indonesia, this kind of forum is legal and controlled by the government. The members are taken from different parties like scholars of the six religions, some professional, and youths. As a matter of fact, Indonesia has minor conflict, if not none, about religion conflicts.

Walaikumussalam, Upon you, be peace